

MSP Airport Land Use Overlay District

- In 2001, the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) met and forged a joint agreement between the municipalities in the vicinity of the Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport (MSP) that established a common set of height restrictions and land use safety zoning districts. The aim of the restrictions is to protect the citizenry from undue exposure to aircraft operations at MSP Airport, as well as to protect aircraft from undue exposure to obstructions within city limits.
- In June 2004, the **City of Saint Paul** drafted an ordinance that addressed such land use and height restrictions through the establishment of overlay districts. While this draft ordinance has **not** yet been passed by the Planning Commission and City Council, it will establish such restrictions as a part of the City Code.
- The proposed "Airport and Land Use Overlay District" draft ordinance includes "**Airspace Obstruction Zoning**", which governs the heights of buildings. It uses a Precision Instrument Approach (PIA) to establish various airspace zones that specify the maximum height of any building located on land within a given zone. The zones are a function of a parcel's distance from MSP Airport runways.

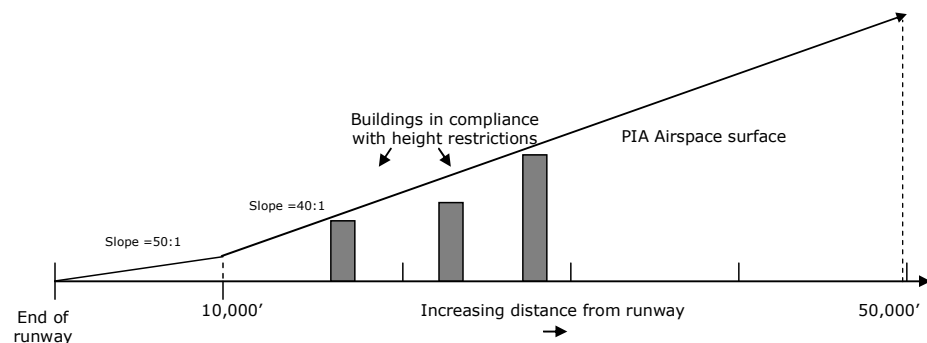


Fig. 1. Building height limits of Airspace Obstruction Zoning

- In general, **as the distance from a runway increases, the maximum allowable building height increases.** The PIA graphic above illustrates this relationship: **No** new structure shall be constructed or established, and **no** existing structure shall be altered, changed, rebuilt, repaired, or replaced in any airspace zone so as to project above any airspace surface. Fig. 2, at the right, shows the **maximum building heights for parcels at the Ford site (in feet, above ground).**

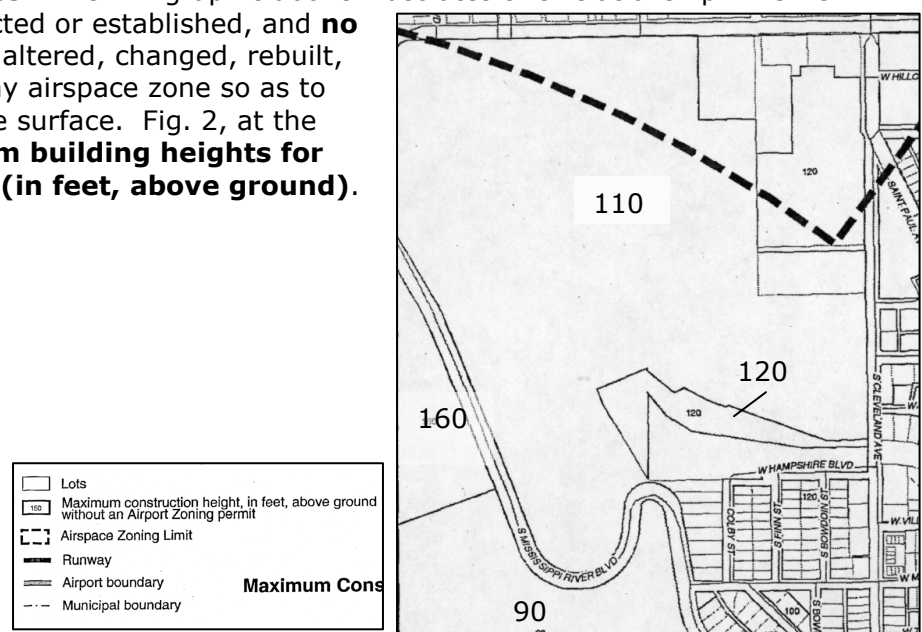


Fig. 2. Maximum Construction Heights permitted, by parcel, without an Airport Zoning Permit

The proposed "Airport and Land Use Overlay District" draft ordinance also includes three "**Land Use Safety Zones**", which restrict various land uses in order to ensure that radio and electronic facilities at the Airport operate effectively, and radio and electronic communications between the Airport and aircraft is clear. The Joint Airport Zoning Board may review a development proposal if it lies within a land use safety zone area, and if significant development is proposed, the FAA may also review the development:

- Safety Zone **A** is the land area immediately beyond the end of the MSP runways, extending outward to 2,500 feet. There shall be no structures or trees in this area, except as related to airport operations.
- Safety Zone **B** is the land area that begins at the outer limit of Safety Zone A, extending outward a distance of 4,500 feet. Generally, the following land uses are generally among those prohibited: Amphitheaters, campgrounds, churches, fuel storage tanks, gas stations, hospitals, nursing homes, residential uses, schools, ponds, wastewater treatment facilities, and other uses that might attract waterfowl.
 - According to MAC staff, roads, parking lots, and open spaces that do not include ponds are allowed in safety zone B, but certain types of residential or office development may not be.
- Safety Zone **C** is the land area not included within Safety Zones A and B, but still falling within the geographical extent of the PIA Airspace Zoning. Land uses are only limited by PIA height restrictions.
- Exemptions: In general, established residential neighborhoods in "built-up urban areas" that existed before July 1979 are not subject to the Safety Zone restrictions & are considered permitted conforming uses. In Safety Zone **B** in established residential neighborhoods in "built-up urban areas," **or** in an area immediately next to such neighborhoods, **existing** low, medium, and high residential uses may be expanded, and **new** low, medium, and high density residential uses may be developed, all subject to PIA height restrictions.
- The **Ford site** is largely unaffected by the Safety Zones as discussed above, with the exception of a portion of the railroad spur parcels, and a small piece of the Ford site, on the southern part of the site, which lies in Safety Zone **B**. In addition, the southwestern tip of the River property (west of Mississippi River Boulevard) lies in Safety Zone **C**.

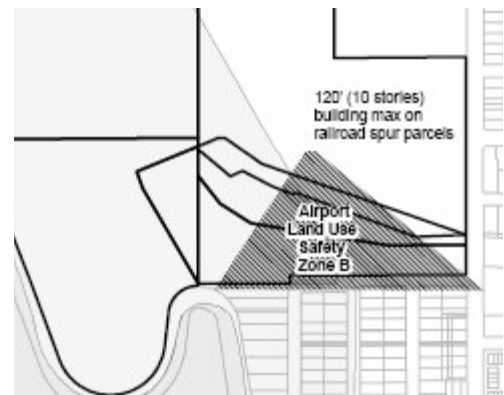


Fig. 3. Parts of the CP railroad spur property and south part of the Ford site lie within Airport Land Use Safety Zone B.